N 'adjustable lunatic'?"
"Yes, sir, an adjustable lunatic-yof may know I don't make a business of insanity, or wouldn't be running at large here on he excess of the city."

It was on the morning of St. Patrick's day. I had been drifting aimlessly around the city for hours, tossed about by the restless tide of humanity that ebbed and flowed in true sea lashion at the Washington and Illinois street crossing. The few friends I had been fortunate enough to fall in with prior to the parade I had been unfortunate enough to lose in the flurry and excitement attending that event; and, brought to a sudden anchorage at the Bates House landing, I found myself to. Want to know how I can tell? the streets of the city." brought to a sudden anchorage at the Bates House landing, I found myself at the mercy of a boundless throng that held not one familiar face. It was a literal jam at that functure, and, anxious and impatient as I was to break away, I was forced into a bondage which, though not exactly agreeable, was at least the source of an experience that will linger in my memory fresh and clear when every other feature of the day shall have faded.

I had been crowded into a position

ture of the day shall have faded.

I had been crowded into a position on a step of the stairway that gave me a lean upon the balustrade and placed me head and shoulders above the crowd; and although I comprehended the helplessness of my position, I was, in a manner, thankful for the opportunity it afforded me to study the unsuspecting subjects just below. As my hungry eyes went foraging about from face to face they fell upon the features of an individual so singularly abstracted in appearance and so apparently oblivious to his surroundings, that I mentally congratulated him upon his enviable disposition.

He was a siender man, of 30 years,

He was a siender man, of 30 years, perhaps; not tall, but something over medium height; he had dark hair and eyes, with a complexion much too fair to correspond; was not richly dressed,

but neatly, and in good taste.
Instinctively I wondered who and
what he was; and my speculative fancy
went to work and made a lawyer of him—then a minister—an artist—a musician—an actor—and a dancing master. Suddenly I found my stare returned with equal fervor, and tried to look way, but something held me. He was elbowing his way to where I

He was elbowing his way to where I stood, and smiling as he came.

"I don't know you," he said, when, after an almost superhuman effort, he had gained my side, to the discomfiture of a brace of mangy little bootblacks that occupied the step below—
"I don't know you personally, but you look bored. I'm troubled with the same disease and want company—as the poet of the Sierras wails, 'How all alone a man may be in crowds!" alone a man may be in crowds!"" Something in the utterance made me offer him my hand.

He grasped it warmly. "It's curious," he said, "how friends are made and where true fellowship begins. Now we've known each other all our lives and never met before. What

I smiled approval at the old asser-

"But tell me," he continued, "what conclusion you have arrived at in your study of me; come, now, be frank—what do you make of me?"

Although I found myself considerably startled, I feigned composure and acknowledged that I had been speculating as to who and what he was, but found myself unable to define a special character.

I smiled incredulously.

"Now, don't look lofty and assume a professional air, for you're only a mechanic, and a sign painter at that."

Although he spoke with little courtesy of address, there was a subtle something in his eye that drew me magnetlike and held me. I was silent.

sharp glance at my bewildered face. "There's nothing wonderful about my knowing that; I've had my eye on you for two hours, and you stare at every sign board you pass, worse than a country pake; and once or twice I saw you stop and study carefully some fresh design, or some new style of letter. You're a stranger here in the city, too. Want to know how I can tell? Because you walk like you were actually going some place; but I notice that you never get there, for continually crossing and recrossing streets, and back-tracking past show windows, and congratulating yourself, doubtless, upon the thorough business air of your reflection in the plate glass. Come, we can get through now; let's walk."

I followed him unhesitatingly. To say that I was simply curlous would be too mild; I was fascinated, and to that degree I actually fastened on his arm, and clung there till we had quite escaped the crowd. "I like you, some way," he said, "but you're too impulsive; you let your fancy get away with your better judgment. Now, you don't know me, and I'm even pondering whether to frankly unbosom to you, or give you the silp; and I'll not leave the proposition to you to decide, for I know you'd say 'unbosom'; so I'll think proposition to you to decide, for I know you'd say 'unbosom'; so I'll think about it quietly for a while yet and give you an unblased verdict."

We walked on in silence for the dis-

turning and angling about till we came upon an open stairway in an old, unpainted brick building, where my strange companion seemed to pause

strange companion seemed to pause mechanically.

"Do you live here?" I asked.

"I stay here," he replied, "for I don't call it living to be fastened up in this old sepuichr. I like it well enough at night, for t ien I feast and fatten on the gloom and glower that infest it; but in the normal atmosphere of day my own room looks repellent, and I only visit it, as now, out of sheer despendent. only visit it, as now, out of sheer des-

If I had at first been mystified with this curious being, I was by this time thoroughly bewildered. The more I studied him the more at a loss I was to fathom him; and as I stood staring blankly in his face, he exclaimed al-most derisively: "You give it up, don't you?

you?"
I nodded,
"Well," he continued, "that's a good
sign, and I've concluded to 'unbosom'
—I'm an adjustable lunatic."
"An adjustable lunatic!" I repeated
blankly. And after the remarkable
proposition that ushers in the story, he
continued, smillingly:

continued, smilingly:
"Don't be alarmed, now, for I'm glad "Don't be alarmed, now, for I'm glad to assure you of the fact that I'm as harmless as a baby butterfly. Nobody knows I'm crazy, nobody ever dreams of such a thing—and why?—because the faculty is adjustable, don't you see, and self-controlling. I never allow it to interfere with business matters, and only let it on at leisure intervals for the amusement it affords me in the pleasurable breaks it makes in the monotony of a matter-of-fact existfrom the continued. "what conclused what he was conclusion you have arrived at in your what do you make or mer".

Althought I found myself considerate with beliance intervals. The amuse of mer what do you make of mer".

Althought I found myself considerate with beliance intervals from the continued of the conti

inters.

We paused at the first landing, my ailters, we may have in ont set it. It's simply an impossibilit, that's all."

I augude uneasily, for although the dictionary and handing me the key with the termark: "You may feel safer with the thremark: "You may feel safer with the thremark." "You may feel safer with the thremark: "You may feel safer with the thremark: "You may feel safer with the thremark." "You may feel safer with the thremark: "You may feel safer with the thremark." "You may feel safer with the safer with the thremark." "You may feel safer with the safer with the thremark." "You may feel safer with the safer wit



WHITCOMB

RILEY

eager to listen than I would have him me to copy it?"

"I understand; go on."
And, with a manner all too wild to be described, he read, or rather recited, the following monstrosity of rhyme:

"Now, what do you think of it?" he asked, with a savageness that started asked, with a savageness that started

the following monstrosity of rhyme:

"I stood beneath a summer moon
All swollen to uncanny girth,
And hanging, like the sun at noon,
Above the center of the earth;
But with a sad and sallow light,
As it had sickened of the night
And fallen in a pallid swoon.
Around me I could hear the rush
Of sullen winds, and feel the whir
Of unseen wings apast me trush
Like phantoms round a sepulchte;
And, like a carpeting of plush,
A lawn unrolled beneath my feet,
Bespangled o'er with flowers as sweet
To look upon as those that nod
Within the garden-lields of God,
But odorless as those that blow
In ashes in the shades below.

"And on my hearing fell a storm."

"And on my hearing fell a storm
Of gusty music, sadder yet
Than every whimper of regret
That sobbing utterance could form.
And patched with scraps of sound that
seemed
Torn out of tunes that demons dreamed,
And pitched to such a piercing key,
It stabbed the ear with agony;
And when at last it lulled and died,
I stood aghast and terrified.
I shuddered and I shut my eyes.
And still could see, and feel aware
Some mystic presence waited there;
And staring, with a dazed surprise,
I saw a creature so divine I saw a creature so divine
That never subtle thought of mine
May reproduce to inner sight
So fair a vision of delight.

"A syllable of dew that drips
From out a lily's laughing lips
Could not be sweeter than the word
I listened to, yet never heard.—
For, oh, the woman hiding there
Within the shadows of her hair,
Spake to me in an undertone
So delicate, my soul alone
But understood it as a moan
Of some weak melody of wind
A heavenward breeze had left behind.

"A tracery of trees, grotesque Against the sky, behind her seen. Like shapeless shapes of arabesque Wrought in an Oriental screen; And tail, austere and statuesque She loomed before it—e'en as though The spirit-hand of Angelo Had chiseled her to life complete With chips of moonshine round her feet.

And I grew jealous of the dusk,
To see it softly touch her face,
As lover-like, with fond embrace,
It folded round her like a husk:
But when the glitter of her hand,
Like wasted glory, beckoned me,
My eyes grew blurred and duil and dim—
My vision failed—I could not see—
I could not str—I could but stand,
Till, quivering in every limb,
I flung me prone, as though to swim
The tide of grass whose waves of green
Went rolling ocean-wide between
My helpless shipwrecked heart and her
Who claimed me for a worshiper.

eager to listen than I would have himknow.

"And will you excuse any little wildness of gesture or expression that I may see fit to introduce in the rendition?"

"Certainly," said I, "certainly; go on."

"And you won't interrupt or get excited? Light another cigar; and here's a chair to throw your feet across. Now, unbutton your coat and lean back. Are you thoroughly comfortable?"

"Thoroughly," said I, impatiently—"a thousand thoroughlies."

"All right," he said; "I'm glad to hear you say it; but before I proceed I desire to call your attention to the fact that this poem is a literary orphan—b foundling, you understand?"

"I understand; go on."

And, with a manner all too wild to be described, he read or rather recited.

Thoughly is all the wild in the you want with it?"

"What do you want with it?"

"I want to study it," I replied.

"And you're sure you don't understand it, and it worries you, and freis you, and vexes you, and haunds you?

What is it? Who will rightly guess If it be ought but nothingness That dribbles from a wayward pen Too spatter in the eyes of men?

What is it? Who will rightly guess If it be ought but nothingness That dribbles from a wayward pen Too spatter in the eyes of men?

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What is it? Who will rightly guess If it the ought but nothingness That dribbles from a wayward pen Too spatter in

asked, with a savageness that startled

"I am more at sea than ever," I re-

plied.
"Well, I wish you a prosperous voy
the poem; I've anoths age! Here's the poem; I've another copy. Read and reflect,' as the railroad poster says, but don't you publish it—at least while I'm alive, for I've no thirst for literary fame—I only writer that you're a good fellow. for home use; but you're a good fellow and I like you for all your weak points, and I trust the confidence I repose will not be disregarded. Come!" He had opened the door and was

holding out his hand for the key.

I gave it to him and followed out mechanically. He left the door ajar and followed to the bottom of the stairs.

"And now, if you'll pardon me." he said, "I'll say goodby here; I've some packing to do, and ought to be at it." "Why, you're not going to leave the city?" I asked.

packing to do, and ought to be at it."

"Why, you're not going to leave the city?" I asked.

"Well, no, not today; but the fig's up with me here, and it's only a question of time—I can't hold out much longer—as our rural friend remarks, 'Money matters is mighty sceere'; and if I don't pull out shortly I'll have to 'fold my tent like the Bedouin and sliently plagiarize away!"

"If I could be of any assistance to you". I began, but he checked me abruptly with: "Oh, no, I don't require it, I assure you; I've \$2 to your \$1, doubtless. Thank you just the same, and goodby. Here's my card; it's not my name, however, but it'll answer: I'll not see you again, though you should live to be as bald as a brickyard, for, my dear friend, I'm going away, Goodby, and may all good things overtake you." overtake you.

He gripped my hand like a vice, and, turning quickly, went skipping up the stairway two steps at a time. "Goodby!" I called to him, sorrow-

"Goodby!" I called to him, sorrowfully; then turned reluctantly away, examining the card he had given me, which, to my astonishment, was not his card at all, but a railroad ticket, entitling the bearer to a ride from Danville, Ills., to York, Pa.; this fact I remember quite distinctly, as I read it over and over, revolving in my mind the impression that this was but another ipstance of his eccentricity, or, perhaps, a trick by which I might be perhaps, a trick by which I might be victimized in some undreamed of way. But upon second thought I concluded it to be simply a mistake, and so turned back and called him to the windows.

low above and explained.

He came down and begged my parton for the trouble he had given me, sook the ticket, thanked me, and said

took the ticket, thanked me, and said goodby again.

"But," said I, "you haven't given me your real card in exchange."

"Oh, no matter!" he said, smilingly. "Call me Smith, Jones, or Robinson, it's all the same; good-bye, and don't forget your old friend and well wisher, the Adjustable Lunatic." And even thus he vanished from sight forever. The remainder of the day and half of the night I spent in studious contemplation of the curious composition, but without arriving at any tangible

but without arriving at an conclusion. I am still engaged with my investigation. Sometimes the meaning seems almost within my mental grasp; but, balancing, adjusting and comparing its many curious bearings, I find my judgment persistently at fault. It has puzzled and bewildered me for weeks. No line of it but canters through my brain like a fractious nightmare, no svillable but fasttious nightmare; no syllable but fast ens on my fancy like a leech, and sucks away the life-blood of my every thought. I am troubled, worried, fretted, vexed and haunted; and I that wiser minds may have an opporthat wiser minds may have an oppor-tunity of making it a subject of in-vestigation, and because one week ago today my eyes fell upon the follow-ing special telegram to the Indianapo-lis Journal:

ing special telegram to the Indianapolis Journal:

"Peru, Ind., April 12.—An unknown
man committed sulcide in the eastward
bound train on the Wabash road, just
below Waverly, at about II o'clock this
morning. He had in his possession,
besides the revolver with which he
shot himself, a ticket from Danville,
Ill., to York, Pa., a gold watch, is
in money, a small valise and some letters and other papers which indicated
his name to be George S. Cloffing.

"He was shot twice in the region of
the heart, and his revolver showed
that between the first and last shots
two cartridges missed fire."

HE FOOLED THE SIOUX

It that a long preliminary confab with Little Thunder. That Sloux band was an old a long preliminary confab with Little Thunder. That Sloux band was an old cavalryman who had seen service on the plains in the way-back, when Indians had their war paint on. But no one suspected it, because for, gears of Indians and was prevented for years past he followed the innective for the early vecause he had not had a long preliminary confab with Little Thunder. That Sloux band was the stretch their legs. All day they sat in those wagon beds, hot and dustry, blast he after that first that Harney three wells had a long preliminary confab with Little Thunder. That Sloux band was in the day-but time and only at night a few got leave to stretch their legs. All day they sat in those wagon beds, hot and dustry, large earlies, fighting and chewing to stretch their legs. All day they sat in those wagon beds, hot and dustry, large earlies field into the corral and do their shooting. They were a happy lot of braves the sing that day; the war a happy lot of braves at five the sum dustry to the civil ag; the war of the day-large earlies and dustry they can be dissourced in the carry and dustry they are the had dustry they are then the strength of the carry and they were carrying dead freight; no faster have the strength of the carry large earlies and then carry large earlies and then the corral and do their shooting. They were a happy lot of braves the day; the twenty the carry had a stretch their legs. All day they sat in those stretch their legs. All day they sat in those stretch their legs. All day they sat in those stretch their legs. All day they sat in those stretch their legs. All day t

The was not not gainst in the way and the plants are not an extra the plants and the way and the plants are not appeared by the commission and from that time and the biggest mine on each the way and the plants are not appeared by the grid, bushed when he more debthes the many and the plants are not appeared by the grid by the first of the commission and from that time and the biggest mine of the plants are not appeared by the grid by the first of the commission and from that time and the biggest mine of the plants are not appeared by the grid by the first of the commission and from that time and the way and the plants are not appeared by the grid by the first of the commission and from that time and the way and the plants are not appeared by the grid by the first of the commission and from that time and the way and the plants are not appeared by the grid by

Precocious James. (Philadelphia Record.)

(Philadelphia Record.)

A popular West Philadelphia clergym is blessed with a small son. James, who is only 2½ years old, but whose peptive powers are most keen, while is always on the alert for a chance exhibit his conversational powers. Cently a strange man came to the sonage to get the clergyman to officiat his wife's funeral. James followed father into the room. The stran blurted out: "Tve lost my wife'— a then, unnerved by his grief, broke int sob.